

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2441

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RP-ASEAN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MARCOS' STATEMENT ON RETURN FROM ASEAN
SUMMIT

SUMMARY: IN AIRPORT SPEECH ON RETURN FROM ASEAN SUMMIT, PRESIDENT MARCOS SAID HE HAD GONE TO BALI FEARFUL THE SUMMIT MIGHT RESULT IN DEBACLE BECAUSE OF IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES AMONG PARTICIPANTS. HE RETURNED, HOWEVER, FEELING "FULFILLED" AND LESS THREATENED AND INSECURE. MARCOS EMPHASIZED EFFECTS BALI WOULD HAVE ON AVERAGE FILIPINO, STRESSING "AGREEMENTS" ON FOOD AND OIL. PRESIDENT NOTED ASEAN EFFORTS ACHIEVE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTARITY AND TRADE BALANCE AMONG MEMBER NATIONS. MARCOS STATED INSURGENCY AND SUBVERSION ARE PRINCIPAL THREATS TO ASEAN NATIONS AND CLAIMED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS BEST DEFENSE AGAINST SUCH THREAT. MEDIA PRAISE OF PRESIDENT HAS BEEN MORE THAN USUALLY FULSOME AND HE IS BEING DESCRIBED AS "PRIME MOVER OF ASEAN UNITY." END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT MARCOS RETURNED FROM BALI SUMMIT AT 1340

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(LOCAL) FEB 25. HE TOLD WELCOMERS HE HAD BEEN FEARFUL

THAT THE SUMMIT WOULD RESULT IN DEBACLE SINCE THERE APPEARED TO BE IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES ON (A) SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES, (B) INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTARITY, (C) COMMODITY SUPPORTS. MARCOS SAID "THANK GOD" POSITIONS HAD BEEN RECONCILED. AFTER ALLUSION TO DEEP AND ABIDING SUSPICION AMONG NATIONS IN THE REGION WHICH HE TRACED TO COLONIAL HERITAGE, MARCOS SAID THAT THESE DIFFERENCES HAD BEEN FORGOTTEN AND ASEAN NATIONS NOW PREPARING TO PRESENT A COMMON FRONT AND TO SOLVE COMMON PROBLEMS. HE CITED SUMMIT'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS, VIZ., TREATY OF AMITY, DECLARATION OF ASEAN ACCORD, AND COMMUNIQUE. ANSWERING HIS OWN RHETORICAL QUESTION ON WHAT DIFFERENTIATED ASEAN FROM PREDECESSORS SUCH AS ASPAC AND MAPHILINDO, HE SAID PAST BARRIERS WERE NOW BEING DISSOLVED. THERE HAD BEEN A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE OF ATMOSPHERE. ASEAN MEMBERS NOW RECOGNIZED EACH OTHER'S INTERESTS AS WELL AS COMMON INTERESTS.

2. MARCOS SAID PEOPLE MIGHT ASK HOW ASEAN SUMMIT AFFECTED THEM PERSONALLY. HE CLAIMED THERE HAD BEEN AGREEMENT TO ASSIST ANY MEMBER COUNTRY SUFFERING FOOD SHORTAGES. ON ENERGY FRONT, THERE HAD BEEN AGREEMENT THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD SUPPLY OIL IN TIMES OF NEED TO AVOID ANY ONE COUNTRY SUFFERING FROM CRISIS OF SCARCITY OR PRICE. AT THIS POINT MARCOS SWITCHED TO TAGALOG AND EMPHASIZED THE OIL AND FOOD AGREEMENTS.

3. MARCOS THEN DISCUSSED QUESTIONS OF INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTARITY, SUGGESTING PROGRESS IN THIS AREA WOULD ACCELERATE DEVELOPMENT. NOTING DECLINE IN PHILIPPINE EXPORTS, HE SAID EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO EFFECT TRADE BALANCE AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES.

4. ALMOST AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, MARCOS REFERRED TO RELEVANCE OF SUMMIT TO SECURITY. HE REITERATED THAT PRINCIPAL THREAT IN EACH MEMBER COUNTRY IS INSURGENCY AND SUBVERSION. THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST SUCH THREATS IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IMPACTS ON EVEN THE LOWEST LEVELS OF SOCIETY. PRESIDENT CONCLUDED BY STATING HE RETURNED FROM BALI SUMMIT WITH SENSE OF "FULFILLMENT;" HE FELT LESS THREATENED AND INSECURE AFTER HIS MEETING WITH OTHER HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, WHOM HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DESCRIBED AS BROTHERS WHO WOULD SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN TIMES OF STRESS. PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED BALI DELEGATION WOULD REPORT ON SUMMIT TO CABINET, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND NEDA ON FEB 27. MARCOS NOTED THAT ECONOMIC MINISTERS WOULD BE MEETING IN KUALA LUMPUR IN MARCH.

5. PRESIDENT WAS INTRODUCED BY FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO WHO SAID SUMMIT HAD PRODUCED "UNITARY DOCUMENT OF HISTORICAL

IMPORTANCE." ROMULO QUOTED INDONESIAN NEWSPAPERS DESCRIBING PRESIDENT AS MOST ELOQUENT STATESMAN AT SUMMIT. COMMENTATORS REPORTING PRESIDENT'S ARRIVAL DESCRIBED HIM AS "TRANSMISSION LINE IN LINKING ALL FIVE STATESMEN;" DEPICTED HIM AS "PRIME MOVER OF ASEAN UNITY;" AND DESCRIBED HIM AS MOST ADEPT IN "BACKROOM HAGGLING" WHICH RECONCILED DIFFERENCES AT CONFIERENCES.

6. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH PREDICTABLY SELF-SERVING, PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT AIRPORT PUT BEST FOOT FORWARD ON LIMITED ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BALI AND EMPHASIZED TO HIS COUNTRY THE PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF ASEAN MEMBERSHIP. PRESIDENT'S STRONG STRESS ON "BREAD AND BUTTER" ASPECTS OF SUMMIT SEEMS DESIGNED TO ASSURE AVERAGE FILIPINOS HIS FOREIGN TRAVELS ARE RELEVANT TO THEIR CONDITION EVEN THOUGH PROSPECTS OF FOOD AND OIL "AGREEMENTS" BEING IMPLEMENTED REMAIN TO BE SEEN. WE SHALL BE REPORTING IN MORE DETAIL AFTER WE HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK LOCAL REACTION TO BALI MEETING.
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